

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 00803 031012Z

14

ACTION EA-09

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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 0803

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KS

SUBJECT: NDP LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE

REF: SEOUL 0500 (PR 220757Z JAN 76) SEOUL 0424

SUMMARY: OPPOSITION NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY IS ALREADY PREOCCUPIED WITH INTERNAL POWER STRUGGLE PREPARATORY TO MAY PARTY CONVENTION. STRUGGLE PITS PARTY PRESIDENT KIM YONG-SAM, WHO IS USING HIS OFFICE TO INCREASE CONTROL OVER PARTY, AGAINST RIVAL OPPOSITION LEADERS WHO PROPOSE REPLACING KIM WITH COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP. OUTCOME IS UNCLEAR. END SUMMARY

1. SINCE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR NDP LEADER KIM YONG-SAM HAS TAKEN OFFENSIVE TO CONSOLIDATE GRIP ON HIS PARTY. HE APPONTED MAVERICK FORMER DRP ASSEMBLYMAN KIM TAL-SU AND RETIRED BRIG. GENERAL YUN HYU-PYO TO POLITICAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, EXPANDED CENTRAL COMMITTEE BY FILLING 30 VACANCIES WITH VARIETY NON-NDP FIGURES INCLUDING MEMBERS OF NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY, AND SHORTLY WILL ANNOUNCE NEW APPOINTMENTS FOR FIVE VACANT CHAPTER

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PAGE 02 SEOUL 00803 031012Z

CHAIRMANSHIPS WHO CONTROL FIVE CONVENTION

DELEGATES EACH. APPOINTMENTS SHOULD INCREASE KIM'S SUPPORT IN PARTY ADMINISTRATION AND AMONG CONVENTION DELEGATES WHOSE NUMBER NOW INCREASED BY 32 TO TOTAL OF ROUGHLY 700.

2. KIM YONG-SAM TOLD EMBOFF THAT DURING PERIOD LEADING UP TO CONVENTION HIS FIRST GOAL MUST BE TO COUNTER CHALLENGES BY OTHER FACTIONAL LEADERS AND THAT APPOINTMENTS MADE WITH THIS IN MIND. KIM SAID THAT AFTER 1974 CONVENTION HE HAD MADE MISTAKE IN APPOINTING RIVAL FACTION MEMBERS TO MANY KEY PARTY POSITIONS, BUT THAT HE INTENDS TO ELIMINATE THESE "UNTRUSTWORTHY" RIVALS AFTER GAINING CLEAR VICTORY AT CONVENTION AND EMERGE IN UNDISPUTED CONTROL ON NDP.

3. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT APPOINTMENTS MADE CHIEFLY FOR INTERNAL PARTY REASONS, KIM ADDED THAT HE HOPES TO ENHANCE NDP'S CREDIBILITY WITH PUBLIC IN ORDER TO PAVE WAY FOR POSSIBLE ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES IN SUMMER OR FALL. KIM ALSO CLAIMED THAT APPOINTMENTS BROADEN OPPOSITION'S BASE, THAT ROKG IS UPSET AT NDP ENLISTMENT OF FORMER GOVERNMENT POLITICIAN AND MILITARY OFFICER, AND THAT IN PAST KCIA HAS BLOCKED SUCH OPPOSITION.

4. CONSENSUS AMONG EMBASSY SOURCES IS THAT KIM'S RECENT ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIONS SUCH AS RELATIVELY HARD-HITTING PRESS CONFERENCE JANUARY 17 (SEOUL 0424) AND ALSO TARGETED CHIEFLY AT REBUILDING HIS STRENGTH AND IMAGE, ESPECIALLY WITH THE RANK AND FILE CONVENTION DELEGATES. MOREOVER, KIM'S INDICTMENT ON EMERGENCY MEASURE NO.9 CHARGES (SEOUL 0500) IS NOT GENERALLY VIEWED AS SIGN OF MAJOR CONFLICT WITH ROKG. RATHER JOURNALIST AND NDP ASSEMBLYMEN HAVE POINTED OUT TO US THAT KIM YONG-SAM HAS GAINED PRESTIGE AND HAS BEEN HELPED IN NDP POWER STRUGGLE BY INDICTMENT, ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT THIS WAS EXPLICIT ROKG INTENTION.

5. KIM'S RIVALS WITHIN NDP HAVE RESPONDED TO HIS ACTIVITIES BY PUBLICLY ACCUSING HIM OF "DICTATORIAL" OPERATION OF THE PARTY AND MISUSE OF POWER IN MAKING APPOINTMENTS SO AS TO STACK CONVENTION WITH HIS OWN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SEOUL 00803 031012Z

SUPPORTERS. THESE NON-MAINSTREAMERS HAVE ATTEMPTED TO BLOCK APPOINTMENTS BY BOYCOTTING POLITICAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND CIRCULATING PETITION AMONG CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS. NET RESULT IS THAT PROBLEM HAS BEEN SHELVED UNTIL MID-FEBRUARY WHEN KIM YONG-SAM AND OTHER NDP OFFICIALS WILL RETURN FROM JAPAN AND OTHER FOREIGN JUNKETS. PRIVATELY KIM'S OPPONENTS SAY THEY HAVE LITTLE HOPE OF BLOCKING APPOINTMENTS WHICH KIM CLEARLY

ENTITLED TO MAKE. FOR LONGER TERM, RIVAL FACTIONAL LEADERS YI CHOL-SUNG, KO HUNG-MUN, SIN TO-HWAN, AND YI MIN-U HAVE DISCUSSED JOINTING FORCES AT CONVENTION TO REPLACE STRONG ONE-MAN RULE WITH COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP. HOWEVER, EVEN IN EVENT THAT FACTIONS UNITE, IT NOT AT ALL CLEAR THEY WILL BE ABLE TO MARSHALL VOTES REQUIRED TO UNSEAT KIM.

6. WITH NDP CONVENTION STILL MORE THAN THREE MONTHS AWAY WE LOOK FORWARD TO LONG SPELL OF CHARGE AND COUNTERCHARGE. KIM WHO HAS ODDS IN HIS FAVOR AT MOMENT WILL CONTINUE TO BE CRITICIZED BY NDP HARD-LINERS FOR PLAYING BALL WITH ROKG AND BY FACTIONAL BOSSES FOR "DICTATORIAL" RULE OF PARTY. HOWEVER, KIM'S CHIEF RIVALS SUCH AS YI CHOL-SUNG AND KO HUNG-MUN ARE AS MUCH IF NOT MORE OPEN TO CHARGES OF COLLABORATION WITH GOVERNMENT AS IS KIM YONG-SAM AND ARE SURE TO GET THEIRS IN RETURN. IT IS OF COURSE CONCEIVABLE ALTHOUGH NOT LIKELY AT THIS POINT THAT ANOTHER STRONGLY ANTI-GOVERNMENT LEADER WILL EMERGE. KIM TAE-CHUNG HAS BEEN CONVICTED BY COURT HOWEVER, AND WITH THE GOVERNMENT DETERMINED TO KEEP HIM OUT OF POLITICS IT IS UNLIKELY HE WILL BE A FACTOR. NOR AS YET HAVE WE SEEN ANY SIGN THAT HARD-LINERS WILL FIND ANOTHER CANDIDATE CAPABLE OF RIDING ANTI-YUSHIN PLATFORM TO PARTY LEADERSHIP AS KIM YONG-SAM DID IN 1974.

8. IN SUM KIM YONG-SAM APPEARS TO HAVE ODDS IN HIS FAVOR AT PRESENT. IN LAST ANALYSIS HOWEVER, MUCH WILL DEPEND ON WHOM GOVERNMENT WITH ITS POWER OVER FINANCIAL RESOURCES DECIDES TO BACK.
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